

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Research and Reports
23 October 1962

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Bloc Shipping to Cuba

1. Soviet ships with military cargoes were continuing to leave the USSR as of 20 October. At this moment we can account for at least 27 Soviet bloc ships en route to Cuba. Of these, 19 are Soviet dry cargo vessels, most of which are believed to be carrying equipment associated with the military buildup in Cuba. The remainder is made up of 2 or 3 satellite ships and 6 Soviet tankers; we do not think these are directly connected with the buildup.
2. Nearly 20 Soviet bloc ships are in Cuban ports, and about 15 are spread across the Atlantic on return voyages from Cuba.
3. We do not have firm cargo information on those Soviet ships now en route to Cuba and believed to be carrying military equipment. Sightings and photography are not yet available for most of the vessels. Preliminary information, however, suggests that the Leninsky Komsomol--due in Cuba about 24-25 October--may be carrying as many as 13 crated IL-28 bombers as deck cargo. Two similar shipments arrived in late September and a third shipment of 7 crated IL-28s appears to have arrived recently (bringing total arrivals of these aircraft to about 30). The Bolshevik Sukhanov--due in Cuba 2 or 3 November--also carries 7 large crates which may contain aircraft. The Poltava, which will arrive in Cuba about 23 or 29 October, has one hatch of sufficient size to accommodate objects up to 80 feet long. This ship may have carried MRBMs/IRBMs on two other voyages to Cuba and could have such a cargo on this voyage.

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1. We have not detected any unusual activity or alerting of Soviet forces during the first few hours after the President's speech.
2. Altogether there are some 27 Soviet bloc ships at sea heading for Cuban ports. Of these, 19 are Soviet dry cargo ships, most of which are believed to be carrying military-associated cargo.
3. Cuba has assailed the quarantine as an act of war and followed the American lead in demanding a Security Council meeting. There has been no official bloc reaction. NATO and OAS nations appear prepared to give full support to the US position.
4. Latest surveillance of Cuba shows nine offensive missile sites, and we suspect a tenth. Four of the IRBM sites are operational and the other two have emergency operational capability. We count 23 launchers and 33 missiles. The three IRBM sites under construction are expected to achieve operational readiness by 1-15 December. Of the 24 surface-to-air missile sites, 23 are operational. Cuban armed forces have been placed on full alert.